

MARKED-UP COPY OF AMENDED CLAIMS:

1. (Amended) In a network including an information device connected to a plurality of control devices via communication means having a prescribed communication format, ~~A a method for controlling a plurality of portions in an the information device by a plurality of control devices in a network which is formed by connecting the information device to the plurality of control devices via communication means having a prescribed communication format,~~ comprising:

providing selecting means to at least one of the plurality of control devices from the information device;

selecting said one of the portions to be controlled using the selecting means; ~~which said control device desires to control, from means for selecting said portion to be controlled which is provided by said information device to said control device,~~

transmitting the selected information itself corresponding to the selected portion and identification information on said ~~corresponding to the one control device having selected said portion to be controlled to said the information device;~~

preserving the identification information on said ~~corresponding to the selected portion to be controlled which is selected and the said identification information on said corresponding to the one control device as a control correspondence table, wherein in which said both the information corresponding to the selected portion and the identification information are brought into correspondence correspond with each other;~~ ~~by said information device having received said selected information and said identification information on said control device,~~

repeating said selecting step, said transmitting step and said preserving step each time said control devices ~~device selects said a portion to be controlled, and~~

issuing a control request from another of the plurality of control devices to control another of the portions to be controlled, wherein the control request includes identification information corresponding to the another control device; and

controlling said—the another portion to be controlled by referring to the control correspondence table which corresponds to identification information on an issuer of a control request, by referring to said control correspondence table which is preserved, when said information device receives said control request from said control device.

2. (Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the information device is connected to the plurality of control devices via said communication means is an IEEE1394 digital interface.

3. (Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said selecting step includes providing a pass-through command defined in an AV/C panel subunit model and command set from the information device to the one control device each of said means for selecting the portion to be controlled and means for and said step of controlling the one portion to be controlled uses/includes controlling using thea pass-through command which is defined in the an AV/C panel subunit model and the command set.

4. (Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said—the information device is—capable—of reproducingreproduces software information recorded in a digital versatile disc.

5. (Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the information device is connected to the plurality of control devices via said communication means uses an interface based on a wireless communication.

6. (Amended) The method according to claim 5, wherein ~~said the~~ wireless communication uses the Bluetooth method.

7. (Amended) The method according to claim 5, wherein ~~said the~~ wireless communication uses an infra-red ray method.

8. (Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~said the~~ information device ~~is capable of reproducing~~ reproduces audio visual information recorded in a hard disc.

9. (Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~said each of the plurality of control devices~~ is a digital television receiver which can receive ~~capable of receiving~~ digital broadcasts.

10. (Amended) An information processing apparatus ~~which is connected to a plurality of control devices via communication means having a prescribed communication format to form a network and which is controlled by said control device,~~ said information processing apparatus comprising:

a plurality of portions to be controlled, each of said plurality of portions being controllable~~which can be controlled by any one of the plurality of said control devices;~~

a transmitter operable to provide selection means to ~~saideach one of the plurality of control devices, for each control device, the selection means being operable to in order that said control device can select a one of said plurality of portions to be controlled, which said by the control device wants to control;~~

a receiver operable to receive information ~~itself~~ corresponding to said selected portion by the selection means and identification information corresponding to the ~~on said control device having selected the said selected portion to be controlled;~~

a preserving unit operable to preserve ~~identification—said~~ information corresponding to ~~on the selected said portion to be controlled, which is selected and said the~~ identification information on said control device as a control correspondence table, said information corresponding to said selected portion and said identification information ~~in which the both identification information are in correspondence~~ corresponding with each other; and

a controller operable to control another of the portions to be controlled upon issuance of a control request from another of the plurality of control devices referring to said control correspondence table to determine in which, each time said control device selects the portion to be controlled, the provision of the selection means, the reception made by the receiver, and the preservation made by the preserving unit are repeatedly performed, and which, when the receiver receives a control request from said control device, by referring to said control correspondence table which is preserved, controls the portion to be controlled, which control device corresponds to the identification information of the another control device ~~on an issuer of the control request.~~

11. (Amended) An information control system, comprising:

~~in which~~ an information device having a plurality of portions to be controlled; and

a plurality of control devices, each said control device being capable of controlling each of said plurality of portions in said the information device and having selection means for selecting one of said plurality of portions to be controlled and control request means for issuing a request to control the selected portion, said information device and said plurality of control devices— are being connected via communication means having a prescribed communication format

~~to form a network; and said control device controls the portions to be controlled in the information device, wherein said control device has selection means for selecting the portion to be controlled and control request means for making a request to control the selected portion to be controlled, said information device comprising:~~

~~a plurality of portions to be controlled which are controllable by said control device;~~

~~a transmitter operable to provide the selection means to said each one of said plurality of control devices in order that said control device can select the portion to be controlled, which said control device wants to control;~~

~~a receiver operable to receive information itself selected corresponding to said selected portion by the selection means and identification information corresponding to ~~on the~~ one of the plurality of control devices having selected the said selected portion to be controlled;~~

~~a preserving unit operable to preserve the information corresponding to identification information on said selected portion to be controlled and the identification information ~~on~~ corresponding to the one control devices as a control correspondence table, wherein ~~in which the both identification~~ the information and the identification information are ~~in correspondence~~ correspond with each other; and~~

~~a controller for controlling each of said selected portions by referring to the control correspondence table in which, each time said control device selects said portion to be controlled, the provision of the selection means, the reception made by the receiver, and the preservation made by the preserving unit are repeatedly performed, and which, when the receiver receives a control request from said control device, by referring to said control correspondence table which is preserved, controls said portion to be controlled, to~~

determine which control device corresponds to the
identification information ~~on an issuer of the control~~
request.

REMARKS

The above-noted amendments to claims 1-11, as well as the submission of a revised Abstract and revisions to the Specification are respectfully submitted prior to initiation of the prosecution of this application in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

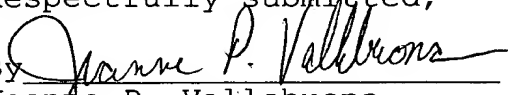
The amendments to the claims are respectfully submitted in order to more clearly and appropriately claim the subject matter which applicants consider to constitute the invention. No new matter is included in these amendments. Furthermore, these amendments do not narrow the scope of the claims, nor are they made for a reason related to patentability. In addition, the revisions to the Abstract and Specification are submitted in order to clarify and correct the Abstract and Specification and to conform them to the formal requirements of U.S. practice. No new matter is included in these amendments.

In view of the above, it is respectfully requested that these amendments now be entered, and that prosecution on the merits of this application now be initiated. If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe such action can be taken, it is respectfully requested that he or she telephone applicant's attorney at (908) 654-5000 in order to overcome any objections which the Examiner may have.

If there are any charges in connection with this requested amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge applicant's Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

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The present invention enables a control device to make an information device operate properly even if there are a plurality of portions to be controlled in the information device and a plurality of control devices. The control device selects the portion which it wants to control from selection means provided by the information device thereto, the selected information corresponding to the selected portion and identification information on the control device having selected the portion to be controlled are transmitted to the information device; the information device having received both the selected information and the identification information makes identification information on the selected portion correspond to the identification information on the control device and preserves both the selected information and the identification information in a RAM as a control correspondence table. Each time the control device selects the portion to be controlled, the selection, the transmission, and the preservation are repeatedly performed. When the information device receives a control request from the control device, the information device controls, by referring to the control correspondence table which is preserved, the portion corresponding to the identification information of an issuer of the control request.



ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

~~An object of the~~The present invention is ~~to enable~~enables a control device to make an information device operate properly even if there are a plurality of portions to be controlled in the information device and a plurality of control devices. ~~When the~~The control device selects the portion which it wants to control from selection means provided by the information device thereto, the selected information corresponding to the selected portion and identification information on the control device having selected the portion to be controlled are transmitted to the information device; the information device having received both ~~of the~~ selected information and the identification information makes identification information on the selected portion correspond to the identification information on the control device and preserves both ~~of the~~ selected information and the identification information in a RAM as a control correspondence table. Each time the control device selects the portion to be controlled, the selection, the transmission, and the preservation are repeatedly performed. When the information device receives a control request from the control device, the information device controls, by referring to the control correspondence table which is preserved, the portion corresponding to the identification information of an issuer of the control request.



INFORMATION CONTROL METHOD,
INFORMATION PROCESSING APPARATUS,
AND INFORMATION CONTROL SYSTEM

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] The present application claims priority from Japanese Application No. P2000-251238 filed August 22, 2000, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference herein.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to an information control system in which, for example, an information device and a control device are connected via an interface to each other.

[0003] Conventionally, there ~~existed~~ exists an information control system in which an information device and a control device ~~were~~ are connected via an interface to each other.

[0004] In this conventional information control system, the control device ~~on the side of~~ controlling the information device ~~was~~ is called "a controller" and the information device ~~on the side of~~ being controlled by the control device ~~was~~ is called "a target".

[0005] However, in the above-described conventional information control system, when the controller controls the target using ~~as a control command~~ a so-called "passthrough pass-through" ~~command~~ which is control command given to the target ~~side~~ in a unified form, ~~there was the following inconvenience~~ problems arise when the target has a plurality of subunits. ~~Because this passthrough command is such that~~ Since the controller as an issuer issuing the pass-through command cannot hold information on subunits in the target, when the ~~passthrough~~ pass-through command is issued to a target having a plurality of subunits, ~~passthrough~~ pass-through to the desired subunit cannot be controlled by the current ~~passthrough~~ pass-through command.

[0006] Moreover, in the above-described conventional information control system, additional problems arise when the target has a plurality of portions to be controlled (herein referred to as "controlled portions") and ~~besides~~ there are a plurality of controllers ~~there was also the following inconvenience.~~ When ~~the~~ a target having a plurality of ~~portions to be controlled~~ portions is controlled by a plurality of controllers, it is impossible to determine which one of the controlled portions in the target should be controlled by which controller. For this reason, this target is difficult to operate ~~as expected by the controller side.~~

[0007] As described above, when it is unknown which one of the plurality of controllers issued ~~a deciding issuer of the control command issued by the controller is unknown,~~ the target having received that command has ~~inconveniently~~ no way of determining how to process that command.

[0008] ~~The present invention has been made in view of the above-described points and thus has as~~ Thus, an object of the present invention is to provide an information control method, information processing apparatus, and information control system in which, even if there are a plurality of ~~portions to be controlled~~ portions in the information device and a plurality of control devices, the control devices ~~side~~ can cause the information device to operate properly.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] An information control method according to the present invention is applicable to ~~a case where~~ an information device having a plurality of controlled portions ~~to be controlled~~ is connected to a plurality of control devices capable of controlling the information device via communication means having a predetermined communication format to form ~~construct~~ a network. ~~the~~ The control device and controls the ~~portions to be controlled~~ portions in the

information device. ~~The portion(s) to be controlled may hereinafter be referred to as "controlled portion(s)".~~

[0010] The information control method according to the present invention is ~~such as follows. When the~~The control device selects the controlled portion ~~which it wants to control~~ be controlled from means for selecting the controlled portion which the information device provides to the control device. The ~~, the~~ selected information ~~itself~~ corresponding to the selected controlled portion and identification information ~~on~~ corresponding to the control device ~~having selected~~ selecting the controlled portion controlled portion are transmitted to the information device. The information device having received the selected information and the identification information ~~on~~ corresponding to the control device causes therein ~~identification information on the selected information corresponding to the selected controlled portion and identification information~~ corresponding to ~~of~~ the control device to correspond ~~to~~ with each other and preserves ~~the both identification information preserved as a control correspondence table.~~ Each time the control device selects the ~~portion to be controlled~~ portion, the selection, the transmission, and the preservation discussed above are repeatedly performed. When the information device has receives a control request from the control device, the information device controls, ~~by referring to the control correspondence table, the portion to be controlled~~ the controlled portion corresponding to the identification information of the issuance origin of the control request by referring to the control correspondence table.

[0011] An information processing apparatus according to the present invention is ~~applicable to a case where it is~~ connected to a plurality of control devices via communication means having a prescribed communication format to form a

network. ~~and~~ The information processing apparatus is controlled by the plurality of control devicedevices.

[0012] The information processing apparatus according to the present invention comprises: a plurality of ~~portions~~ controlled portions to be controlled ~~able to be controlled by~~ the control devicedevices; ~~transmitting means~~ a transmitter for providing selection means to the control device in order that the control device can select a controlled ~~portion~~ portion ~~which it wants to control~~; ~~receiving means~~ a receiver for receiving selected information itself corresponding to the controlled-portion selected by the selection means and identification information ~~on~~ corresponding to the control device having selected the portion to be controlled controlled portion; ~~a preserving means~~ unit for preserving the identification information on the controlled-portion which is selected and the identification information on the control device as a control correspondence table in which the both ~~information are in correspondence to~~ with each other; and ~~control means in which~~ a controller wherein, each time the control device selects the ~~portion to be controlled~~, controlled portion the provision of the selection means, the reception made by the ~~receiving means~~ receiver, and the preservation made by the ~~preserving means~~ unit are repeatedly performed, and ~~which~~, when the ~~receiving means~~ receiver receives a control request ~~to~~ from the control device, ~~by referring to the control correspondence table which is been preserved~~, the controller controls the portion to be controlled controlled portion that corresponds to the identification information ~~on an issuer of the control request~~ by referring to the control correspondence table.

[0013] An information control system according to the present invention is configured as follows. The control device includes selection means for selecting a ~~portion to be controlled~~ controlled portion and ~~control request means~~ a

controller for making a request to control the selected ~~portion to be controlled~~controlled portion. The information device includes a plurality of ~~portions to be controlled~~controlled portions which are controllable by the control device; ~~transmitting means~~a transmitter for providing the selection means to the control device in order for the control device ~~to~~to select the ~~portion to be controlled~~controlled portion it wants to control; ~~receiving means~~a receiver for receiving selected information ~~itself~~corresponding to the controlled portion selected ~~is made by~~ the selection means and identification information on the control device having selected the ~~portion to be controlled~~controlled portion; a ~~preserving means~~unit for preserving ~~identification~~the selected information ~~on~~corresponding to the portion to be controlledcontrolled portion ~~which is selected~~ and the identification information on the control device as a control correspondence table in which ~~the both information are in correspondence to~~correspond ~~with~~ each other; and ~~control means~~in whicha controller ~~wherein~~, each time the control device selects the ~~portion to be controlled~~controlled portion, the provision of the selection means, the reception of the ~~receiving means~~receiver, and the preservation made by the preserving ~~means~~unit are repeatedly performed, and ~~which~~, when the ~~reception means~~receiver has received a request to control from the control device, ~~by referring to the control correspondence table that has been preserved~~, the controller controls the portion to be controlledcontrolled portion that corresponds to the identification information ~~on an issuer of that the control request~~by referring to the control correspondence table that has been preserved.

[0014] Accordingly, the present invention has the following functions.

[0015] ~~Because each of~~Since the information device and the control device ~~has~~devices have information which is ~~peculiar~~unique to the relevant device, ~~the respective devices~~unique "identification information" about one device can ~~acquire~~be acquired by other devices~~the peculiar to the device.~~

[0016] The control device acquires information on the ~~portion to be controlled~~controlled portion ("selected information") and, from identification information on the information device, selects an information device having the ~~portion to be controlled~~controlled portion which the user desires to control. Further, from the selected information ~~on corresponding to the portions to be controlled~~controlled portion, the control device selects the ~~portion to be controlled~~controlled portion which the user wants to control.

[0017] ~~Selector identification~~Identification information is corresponding to the control device that selected the controlled portion and selected information corresponding to the selected controlled portion are transmitted to the information device, ~~and the information device acquires selectee identification information.~~ The information device brings the selector identification information of the corresponding control device and the ~~selectee~~selected identification information to the controlled corresponding portion into correspondence with each other, and preserves ~~the both identification information~~ as a control correspondence table.

[0018] When thereafter a request to control ~~the portion to be controlled~~a controlled portion is issued from the control device ~~is issued~~, the information device having received that request refers to the identification information on the control device having issued that request and the control correspondence table which it preserves therein. The information device, thereby ~~produces an effect of that control request on the portion to be controlled~~controls the

controlled portion as requested in the control request which
is made to correspond thereto.

[0019] ~~The~~ Thus, the control device controls the information device, or when selecting ~~it,~~ the controlled portion, the control device interprets the operation made by the user and performs its control function via communication means.

[0020] The information device preserves the control correspondence table therein and so, when ~~having receiving~~ the control request to control ~~the portion to be controlled~~ has ~~been~~ a controlled portion is issued from the control device, the information device refers to the control correspondence table, ~~thereby controlling the portion to be controlled~~ appropriately to control the controlled portion.

[0021] This information control system ~~has such a~~ configuration is configured so that the information device can preserve the control correspondence table. Accordingly, by referring to the control correspondence table for the control requests from ~~a~~ the plurality of control devices, the information device detects the ~~portion to be~~ controlled controlled portion which is associated with the relevant control device, and it determines that the controlled ~~portion detected is what the~~ one the control device desires to control and makes the controlled portion operated appropriately.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0022] FIG. 1 is a configuration diagram showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of a control system according to ~~which~~ the present invention ~~is applied;~~

[0023] FIG. 2 is an explanatory diagram showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of a data transmission cycle by an IEEE 1394 system bus;

[0024] FIG. 3 is an explanatory diagram showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of the address space in the CSR architecture;

[0025] FIG. 4 is an explanatory diagram showing ~~examples~~ embodiments of position, name, and function of the principal CSR;

[0026] FIG. 5 is an explanatory diagram showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of the general ROM format;

[0027] FIG. 6 is an explanatory diagram showing ~~examples~~ embodiments of the bus info block, root directory, and unit directory;

[0028] FIG. 7 is an explanatory diagram showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of the PCR;

[0029] ~~FIG~~FIGS. 8A to FIG. 8B are explanatory diagrams each showing an ~~example-embodiment~~ embodiment of oMPR, oPCR, iMPR, and iPCR;

[0030] FIG. 9 is an explanatory diagram showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of the relation among the plug, plug control register, and transmission channel;

[0031] FIG. 10 is an explanatory diagram showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of a data structure according to a hierarchical structure of a descriptor;

[0032] FIG. 11 is an explanatory diagram showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of the data format of the descriptor;

[0033] FIG. 12 is an explanatory diagram showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of the generation ID in FIG. 11;

[0034] FIG. 13 is an explanatory diagram showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of the list ID in FIG. 11;

[0035] FIG. 14 is an explanatory diagram showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of a stack model of the AV/C command;

[0036] FIG. 15 is an explanatory diagram showing the relation between the command and response of FCP;

[0037] FIG. 16 is an explanatory diagram showing the relation between the command and response in FIG. 15 in more detail;

[0038] FIG. 17 is an explanatory diagram showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of the data structure of the AV/C command;

[0039] FIG. 18 is an explanatory diagram showing a specific ~~example~~ embodiment of the AV/C command;

[0040] FIG. 19 is an explanatory diagram showing a specific ~~example~~ embodiment of the command and response of the AV/C command;

[0041] FIG. 20 is a structure diagram showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of the information device notification means according to the present invention;

[0042] FIG. 21 is a structure diagram showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of the controlled-portion notification means according to the present invention;

[0043] FIG. 22 is a structure diagram showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of the remote controller according to the present invention;

[0044] FIG. 23 is a structure diagram ~~showing~~ showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of the control correspondence table according to the present invention;

[0045] FIG. 24 is a diagram showing an ~~example~~ embodiment of the control flow; and

[0046] FIG. 25 is a diagram showing a format of the ~~passthrough~~ pass-through command.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0047] An information control method according to ~~this one~~ embodiment of the invention enables one desired portion in a network which is formed by connecting an information device having a plurality of ~~portions to be controlled~~ controlled portions with a control device for controlling the information device via communication means to be controlled. ~~The method is applicable even if means the controller for controlling the portion to be controlled~~ controlled portion (e.g., a control command for the ~~portion to be controlled~~ controlled portion, etc.) does not have an identification information issuer regarding the final issuer destination of the ~~portion to be controlled being an object of control~~ controlled

portion (e.g., ID (identification information) of the ~~portion~~
~~to be controlled~~controlled portion, etc.).

[0048] ~~This~~The information control system includes an information device having a plurality of portions to be controlled or "controlled portions", an interface for connecting the information device to a control device, and a plurality of control devices each of which belongs to its relevant user.

[0049] In this information control system, the information device and the control device are connected with each other via communication means capable of bi-directional transmission of information to thereby form a network. Various types of information such as data or control signals are transmitted or received through this network.

[0050] In this information control system, it is arranged that, when the control device makes the control request after the controlled ~~portion~~ of the information device ~~which is desired to be controlled~~ has been selected via the ~~control means~~controller, ~~that the system is fully equipped with such a structure as~~ that enables controlling it to control the selected controlled portion~~portion to be controlled, by providing the information device and the control device with such a structure as described below. That structure to enable the controlling will be described below in detail.~~

[0051] ~~To begin with, it is assumed that~~The information device and each of the information device and control device devices ~~is~~ are equipped with a ~~device-peculiar~~device unique information memory that retains information ~~being peculiar~~unique to the respective devices. ~~As an~~An example of this ~~device-peculiar~~device unique information memory, ~~there is cited a configuration ROM which is prescribed in P1212, Draft Standard for a Control and Status Registers (CSR) Architecture for microcomputer buses, being a standard for a communication format.~~ In this ~~device-peculiar~~device unique information

memory, it is arranged that the following three information items are retained. Firstly, a vendor name that is information on a vendor indicating a name of the maker which has manufactured the information device, secondly a model name or that is information on a model of the information device, and thirdly, information for identifying the device, such as an icon that is image information on the information device.

[0052] For example, according to an IEEE 1394 format, information unique to the device is stored in the configuration ROM (Read Only Memory) of the device ~~is stored information peculiar to the device.~~

[0053] Moreover, ~~each of the~~ information device and each control device is ~~assumed to be~~ equipped with ~~device-peculiar~~ device unique information acquirement means for acquiring the ~~device-peculiar~~ device unique information from the ~~device-peculiar~~ device unique information memory as described above. ~~As an~~ An example of this device unique-peculiar information acquirement means ~~there is cited~~ an asynchronous read request. ~~It is prescribed in P1394 Standard~~ for a High Performance Serial Bus ~~that is~~ a standard for communication format.

[0054] Furthermore, ~~each of the~~ information device and the control devices ~~is assumed to be~~ are equipped with means for acquiring information on the devices at the time of initializing the network connected using this ~~device-peculiar~~ device unique information acquirement means.

[0055] This allows, at the time of initializing the network, every connected node to acquire information on any connected device by reading the configuration ROM.

[0056] Moreover, the control device is equipped with an information device notification ~~means~~ unit which notifies ~~information obtained by the device-peculiar information acquirement means~~ to a user who wants to control ~~the portion to be controlled~~ the controlled portion of information obtained

by the device unique information acquirement means ~~(hereinafter referred to simply as "the user")~~. As ~~A~~ Graphical User Interface (GUI) is an example of ~~this~~ an information device notification unit ~~means, there is cited a~~ GUI ~~(Graphical User Interface)~~.

[0057] Furthermore, the control device is equipped with information device selection means for selecting the information device having a ~~portion to be controlled~~ controlled portion which the user wants to control, from the information on the information device given by the information device notification ~~means~~ unit.

[0058] This allows, the control device to select an icon on a monitor through the GUI ~~and using a~~ remote commander. The control device can thereby select the information device having a ~~portion to be controlled~~ controlled portion which the user wants to control.

[0059] In addition, the information device includes a ~~controlled-portion notification means~~ unit for notifying ~~information on the portion to be controlled to the control device~~ of information on the controlled-portion via communication means. As ~~an~~ An example of the ~~controlled-portion notification means, there~~ unit is ~~cited a~~ panel prescribed in AV/C command (AV/C Panel Subunit Model and Command Set).

[0060] This enables the information device to provide information for acquiring information on the ~~portion to be controlled to the control device~~ controlled portion.

[0061] For example, in a case where the interface is based on the IEEE 1394 format and the device is controllable using the AV/C command, the device has information ~~of~~ regarding the "subunit type" or controlled portion which indicates the function of the device.

[0062] In this connection, a word "unit" means a digital device itself, while the word "subunit" means what takes

charge of functions of the digital device. Accordingly, a combination of the subunits forms a unit. It is suitably determined by what function the interior of the unit is divided.

[0063] For example, ~~as regards the~~regarding digital devices, a digital television (DTV) unit comprises a combination of a tuner subunit (receiving function) and a monitor subunits ~~considered that a digital television (DTV) unit has~~. Also, ~~for a~~ television-integrated video tape recorder unit, has a combination of a tuner subunit (receiving function), a monitor subunit, and a tape recorder/player sub ~~nitsubunit~~ (recording function/playback function) ~~is considered~~. Also, for a hard disc (HDD) unit, a combination of a hard disc recorder/player ~~subunit~~ subunits (recording/playback function) is considered. Also, for a digital versatile disc (DVD) unit, a combination of a digital versatile disc recorder/player subunit (recording function/playback function) is considered. In this manner, suitable subunits are ~~determined as these~~ functional units.

[0064] It is noted that the above-mentioned subunits are imaginary functional units and therefore ~~are~~ do not always ~~in coincidence~~ coincide with actual circuit structures. It is also noted that some circuits fall outside the category of any subunits, such as a decoder block which is not needed to be controlled by the AV/C command.

[0065] In addition, ~~each of the~~ information device and the control devices are ~~device is assumed to be~~ equipped with a controlled -portion transmission selection means as follows. When selecting the ~~portion to be controlled~~ controlled portion based on information supplied by the controlled -portion notification ~~means~~ unit, the control device ~~notifies~~ transmits the user's selected operation information as a control request to the information device via the communication means. The information device having received ~~it~~ the control request

interprets it according to ~~the controlled-portion notification means~~ what kind of operation has been performed to realize the selection of the controlled portion. ~~That is to say, it is assumed that each of the~~ The information device and the control device ~~devices~~ has ~~such~~ have controlled-portion transmission selection means for realizing the selection of the controlled-portion. ~~It is further to be noted that, thereafter~~ Thereafter, the information device updates the controlled-portion notification ~~means~~ unit in response to the user's operation. ~~As an~~ An example of the controlled-portion transmission selection means, ~~there is cited a passthrough~~ pass-through command, which is prescribed in the AV/C commands (AV/C Panel Subunit Model and Command Set).

[0066] Also, it is assumed that, when the control device transmits a control request given by the user to the information device as a request to control via the communication means, the information device that has received the control request controls the ~~portion to be controlled~~ controlled portion. ~~That is to say, each of~~ Thus, the information device and the control devices ~~is assumed to have such a controlled-portion transmission controller~~ control means ~~as controls the portion to be controlled~~. ~~As an~~ An example of the controlled-portion transmission ~~controller~~ control means, ~~there is cited the passthrough~~ pass-through command which is prescribed in the AV/C command (AV/C Panel Subunit Model and Command Set). This ~~passthrough~~ pass-through command is given in a unified form to the information device having a plurality of ~~portions to be controlled~~ controlled-portions.

[0067] Furthermore, the control device ~~is assumed to have such~~ has a structure that, when the controlled-portion transmission selection means or the controlled-portion transmission ~~control means~~ controller is executed, the ~~control device~~ identification information of the control device ~~itself~~

(hereinafter referred to as "~~the selection/identification information~~") ~~to the selection request or control request made~~ is transmitted via the communication means. ~~As an~~An example of the ~~selection/identification information~~, there is cited a source ID which is indicated by two consecutive bits as counted from the 33rd bit contained in the 1394 packet header of an asynchronous packet.

[0068] In addition, the information device is assumed to be equipped with ~~the following a preserving unit that means.~~ The preserving means can preserve the following two kinds of identification information in a corresponding relationship to each other. One is the identification information on the selected ~~portion to be controlled~~controlled portion (hereinafter referred to as "~~the portion to be selected~~ portion identification information") which the information device can acquire by means of the controlled-portion transmission selection means. The other is the selector/identification information which the information device receives from the control device. ~~What is brought into correspondence~~ The correspondence relationship between the information is preserved in this way each other and is hereinafter called "the control correspondence table".

[0069] Moreover, when receiving the controlled-portion transmission control means from the control device the information device ~~is arranged to have such control means as,~~ when receiving the controlled-portion transmission control means from the control device, has a controller that controls the controlled-portion ~~made to correspond~~that corresponds to the issuer of the controlled-portion transmission control means by referring to the control correspondence table.

[0070] Furthermore, the control device ~~is arranged to have such~~ has a structure ~~as that~~ as can provide information device selection means to the user at any time.

[0071] Also, ~~each of the information device and the control devices device is arranged to have~~ such structure that, when selecting the information device by the information device selection means, this the selected information is transmitted to the information device ~~and thereby~~, a call is made of the controlled-portion notification means.

[0072] Because ~~each of the information device and the control devices each have device has the~~ above-mentioned structures, ~~this the information control system has the following advantage. Particularly, is particularly advantageous since a single controlled portion can be controlled even in case if there are a plurality of portions to be controlled controlled portions and a plurality of information devices and there is even if means for controlling the portions to be controlled (e.g., a control command for the portion to be controlled, etc.) holds no information on a final destination of the controlled portion portion to be controlled being an object of control (e.g., the ID of the portion to be controlled, etc.), it is possible to realize the control of the one portion to be controlled which is desired to be controlled.~~

[0073] As described above, ~~in this the~~ information control system, ~~the information device has such structure as~~ can preserve the control correspondence table. As a result of this, the information device can refer to the control correspondence table on receipt of the control requests from a plurality of control devices. Therefore, the information apparatus can detect the ~~portion to be controlled controlled~~ portion which is associated with the control device and decide that the detected ~~portion controlled portion~~ portion is the portion which the control device desires to control. The information device can thus make that controlled-portion operate properly.

~~{Basic operation}~~

[0074] The information control system configured in this way operates as follows.

[0075] When the information device and a plurality of control devices are connected via communication means to form a network and the network is initialized, each of the devices ~~each of them~~ acquires information on the other devices forming the network using the ~~device-peculiar~~device unique information acquirement ~~means~~unit.

[0076] When the user controls the information device through the control device, the user calls the information device notification ~~means~~unit ~~uses~~. ~~Uses~~ the information device selection means, and selects the information device which the user desires to control.

[0077] On this occasion, the controlled-portion notification ~~means~~unit is called. The user uses the controlled-portion transmission selection means, ~~with the result that to select~~ the controlled-portion which the user wants to control ~~through the control device is selected~~.

[0078] Simultaneously with this, the controlled-portion transmission selection means is executed, so that, the selector identification information is supplied to the information device. Simultaneously with this, the controlled-portion transmission selection means is executed, so that, the information device acquires the selected ~~portion~~controlled portion identification information. Simultaneously with this, the information device makes the selector identification information and the selected portion identification information correspond to each other. Then, the information device preserves ~~the both~~ the selected information and the identification information as the control correspondence table.

[0079] Thereafter, when ~~issuing~~ the request to control the ~~portion to be controlled~~controlled portion is issued through the control device by the controlled-portion transmission

~~control means, this is followed by the subsequent operation.~~
~~The controller, the~~ information device having received ~~that~~
the control request refers to the identification information
on the device having issued that controlled-portion
transmission control means and the control correspondence
table. Then, the information device gives an effect of the
controlled-portion transmission ~~control means~~ controller on the
portion that has been found as having the correspondence.

~~{Specific configuration example}~~

[0080] FIG. 1 is a diagram illustrating the configuration
of the information control system according to ~~to which the~~
~~present invention is applied.~~

[0081] ~~This~~ The information control system includes, ~~as its~~
~~control device,~~ a first control device 1 (DTV1) (10) or
"DTV1" 10 having an IEEE 1394 interface 12, ~~and a second~~
control device 2 (DTV2) (20) or "DTV2" 20, and ~~.~~ It also
~~includes an information device (DVD player) or "DVD player" 1~~
having an IEEE 1394 interface 9. ~~It~~ The information control
system uses an IEEE 1394 interface method as communication
means 18 and 19. Additionally, although not illustrated, the
second control device 20 ~~2 (DTV2) (20)~~ has the same structure
as that of the first control device 10 ~~1 (DTV1) (10)~~ which
will be described below.

[0082] Here, an explanation will be given of the IEEE1394
interface which is utilized in the present information control
system.

[0083] FIG. 2 is a diagram illustrating a cycle structure
of data transmission between the devices connected by means of
the IEEE1394 type bus. In the IEEE1394, the data is divided
into packets and it is time-divisionally transmitted on a
basis of 125 μs ~~s~~-length cycle. This cycle is produced by a
cycle start signal supplied from a node (any one of the
devices connected to the bus) which has a cycle master
function. An isochronous packet secures a band which is

necessary for its transmission and that is measured from the head of every cycle (it is called a "band" although it is a unit of time length). Therefore, in the isochronous transmission, the transmission of data within a fixed length of time is guaranteed. ~~However, in~~ In case a transmission error ~~has occurred~~ occurs, ~~however, there are no structures for protection of the data, so that the data is lost since there is no protection.~~ In an asynchronous transmission which is performed during a time length of each mechanism cycle not used for the isochronous transmission and in which the node having ensured therefor the bus as a result of arbitration sends out an asynchronous packet, it is possible to execute an acknowledge/retry process, so that reliable transmission guaranteed. However, transmission timings ~~are will not become~~ definite.

[0084] ~~In order that~~ For a prescribed node ~~performs to~~ perform isochronous transmission, the node must be compatible with the isochronous function. In addition, at least one of the nodes compatible with the isochronous function must have a cycle ~~master~~ master function. Further, at least one of the nodes connected to the IEEE1394 serial bus 9-1 to 9-4 must have an isochronous resource manager function.

[0085] IEEE1394 is based on a CSR (Control and Status Register) architecture which has a 64 bit address space prescribed in ISO/IEC13213. FIG. 3 is a diagram illustrating the structure of the address space of the CSR architecture. The upper 16 bits are node IDs which represent nodes on the respective IEEE1394s. The remaining 48 bits are used for designating the address space which is given to the respective nodes. The upper-order 16 bits are further classified into 10 bits for bus ID's and 6 bits for physical ID's (the node ID's in a narrow sense). Because a value in which every bit is "1" is used for special purposes, the upper 16 bits can designate 1023 pieces of bus and 63 pieces of node.

[0086] The space defined by upper 20 bits out of the 256-~~thereabout~~ address space defined by the lower 48 bits is divided into ~~the followings.~~ ~~An~~ initial register space (Initial Register Space) used for peculiar 2046-byte register, for CSR- peculiar IEEE1394 register and the like, a private space, an initial memory space and so on. The space defined by the lower 28 bits, in case the space defined by the upper 20 bits thereof is the initial register space, is used as a configuration ROM (Read Only Memory), an initial unit space used for peculiar applications, a plug control register (PCRs), and so on.

[0087] FIG. 4 is a diagram illustrating offset addresses, names, and functions of principal ~~CSR~~-CSRs. The "offset" in FIG. 4 represents the offset addresses from the address "FFFFFF0000000h (the numeral with "h" at its end ~~is what is expressed by there~~represents hexadecimal rotation) at which the initial register space begins. The bandwidth available register having the offset address 220h represents bands which can be assigned to the isochronous communication where - ~~Only~~only a value of the node ~~which is operating as the isochronous resource manager is handled as being effective.~~ While each node has the CSR of FIG. 3, as regards the bandwidth available register, only the isochronous resource manager has is handled being an effective. In other words, the bandwidth available register is substantially possessed by the isochronous resource manager only. In the bandwidth available register there is preserved a maximum value in case no bands is assigned to the isochronous communication. Each time any band is assigned thereto, the value decreases.

[0088] As ~~regards~~-afor the channels available register ~~that~~ corresponding to the offset addresses 224h to 228h, each bit thereof corresponds to each of channel numbers from #0 to #63. In case the bit has a value of "0", it indicates that the relevant channel has already been assigned. Only the channels

available register of the node operating as the isochronous resource manager is effective.

[0089] Referring back to FIG. 3, in the addresses 200h to 400h within the initial register space, there is assigned a configuration ROM based on a general ROM (Read Only Memory) format. FIG. 5 is a diagram illustrating the general ROM format. The node which is a unit of access on the IEEE1394 can have therein a plurality of units each of which independently operates while commonly using the address space. Unit directories can indicate the version and position of software for in that unit. Although the positions of bus info block and root directory are made fixed, the positions of the other blocks are designated by the offset addresses.

[0090] FIG. 6 is a diagram illustrating the details of the bus info block, root directory, and unit directory. ~~In a A~~ "Company ID" inside the bus info block ~~there is stored~~stores an ID number which indicates the manufacturer of device. ~~In a A~~ "Chip ID" ~~is stored~~stores a world-unique ID which is ~~peculiar~~unique to the device without ~~its duplication~~nonoverlapping those of the other devices. According to the IEC 61833 standard, in a unit directory of the apparatus that satisfies the IEC61883, at the first octet, second octet, and third octet of a "unit spec ID" thereof are written 00h, Aoh, and 2Dh, respectively. Further, in a unit switch version (unit sw version), at the first octet thereof and at the LSB (Least Significant Bit) of the third octet thereof are written 01h and 1, respectively.

[0091] In order to control the input/output of the device via the interface, the node has a PCR (Plug Control Register) prescribed under the IEC61883 in the addresses 900h to 9FFh within the initial unit space of FIG. 3. This is ~~what the~~ concept of a "plug" ~~is substantiated by making the interface have such registers for forming in order to form~~ a signal path which has logical similarity to the analog interface. FIG. 7

is a diagram illustrating the construction of the PCR. The PCR has an oPCR (output Plug Control Register) which represents an output plug and an iPCR (input Plug Control Register) which represents an input plug. Also, the PCR has a register oMPR (output Master Plug Register) indicating the information on the output plug ~~peculiar~~unique to each apparatus and a register iMPR (input Master Plug Register) indicating the information on the input plug ~~peculiar~~unique to each device. Although each device has the possibility of having neither a plurality of oMPR nor a plurality of iMPR, it can have a plurality of oPCRs and iPCRs corresponding to its individual plugs according to its capability. The PCR illustrated in FIG. 7 has 31 pieces of oPCR's and 31 pieces of iPCR's. The flow of the isochronous data is controlled by operating the registers corresponding to these plugs.

[0092] ~~Figs~~FIGS. 8A to 8D are diagrams illustrating the constructions of oMPR, oPCR, iMPR, and iPCR. FIG. 8A illustrates the construction of an oMPR; FIG. 8B illustrates the construction of oPCR; FIG. 8C illustrates the construction of an iMPR; and FIG. 8D illustrates the construction of an iPCR. In a 2 bit area of "data rate capability" on the MSB side in each of the oMPR and iMPR ~~is stored~~stores a code which ~~represents~~representing a maximum transmission rate for the isochronous data that the relevant device can transmit or receive. The "broadcast channel base" in the oMPR prescribes a number of a channel which is used for the broadcast output.

[0093] A 5 bit area of "number of output plugs" on the LSB side of the oMPR stores ~~therein~~a value which represents the number of the output plugs possessed by the relevant device has, i.e., the number of oPCRs. A 5 bit area of "number of input plugs" on the LSB side of the iMPR stores ~~therein~~the number of the input plugs the relevant device, i.e. the number of iPCRs. Areas of "non-persistent extension field" and "persistent extension field" are for future extension.

[0094] An area of the MSB "on-line" in each of the oPCR and iPCR represents the state of use of the plug. To be specific, a value of 1 ~~thereof~~ indicates that, the relevant plug is ON-LINE. A value of 0 ~~thereof~~ indicates that the plug is OFF-LINE. A value of "broadcast connection counter (broadcast connection counter)" in each of the oPCR and iPCR represents the presence (1) or absence (0) of the broadcast connection. A value of "point-to-point connection counter" having a with 6 bit width in each of the oPCR and iPCR has represents the number of the point-to-point connections possessed by the relevant plug has.

[0095] A value of "channel number having a 6 bit width" in each of the oPCR and iPCR represents a number of a isochronous channel to which the relevant plug is connected. A value of "data rate" having a 2 bit width in the oPCR represents the real transmission rate of the packet of the isochronous data outputted from that plug. A code which is stored in "overhead ID" having a 4 bit width in the oPCR represents an over bandwidth of the isochronous communication. A value of "payload " having a 10 bit width in the oPCR represents the maximum value of data contained in the isochronous packet which can be handled by the relevant plug.

[0096] FIG. 9 is a diagram illustrating the relationship among the plug, plug control register, and isochronous channel. AV devices 91 to 93 are connected to each other through the use of the IEEE1394 serial bus. Of the oPCR [0] to oPCR [2] of which transmission rate and the number of oPCR are determined by the oMPR of the AV device 93, isochronous data whose channel is designated by the oPCR [1] is sent out to a channel #1 of the IEEE1394 serial bus. Of the iPCR [0] and iPCR [1] whose transmission rate and the number of iPCR are determined by the iMPR of the AV devices 91, the AV device 91 reads in the isochronous data sent out into the channel #1 of the IEEE1394 serial bus by the iPCR [0] having the

transmission rate of the input channel #1. Similarly, the AV device 92 sends out the isochronous data a channel #2 designated by the oPCR [0]. The AV device 91 reads in that isochronous data from the channel #2 designated by the iPCR [1].

[0097] In this way, data transmission is performed ~~between~~ among the devices which are connected to each other through the IEEE1394 serial bus. In the system of this embodiment is utilized the AV/C command set which is prescribed as commands for controlling the apparatuses connected to each other via the IEEE1394 serial bus. The system is arranged to control each device, or estimate the status of each device using AV/C command set. Next, a description will be given of this AV/C command set.

[0098] ~~First of all,~~ the data structure of the Subunit Identifier Descriptor in the AV/C command set used in the system of this embodiment will be described with reference to Figs. 10 to 13. FIG. 10 illustrates the data structure of the Subunit Identifier Descriptor. The subunit identifier Descriptor is formed by lists of a hierarchical structure as illustrated in FIG. 10. The ~~"list"~~list represents, for example, a channel capable of receiving if the relevant item is a tuner, and represents a music, etc. recorded in a disc if the relevant item is a disc. The lists in the uppermost-order layer of the hierarchical structure are called "the root lists". For example, the list 0 forms a root list for its lower lists. The list 2 to list (n-1) also form root lists. ~~The~~ There are as many root list exists as many lists as the number of objects. The ~~"object"~~ herein means, for example, each channel, etc. objects are the channels in the digital broadcast when the AV device is a tuner. All the lists in one layer of the hierarchy share common information.

[0099] FIG. 11 illustrates the format of ~~"The"~~ a General Subunit Identifier Descriptor" which is used in existing

systems. ~~The "A Subunit Identifier Descriptor 41"~~ has ~~contents in which~~ attribute information on functions ~~is described in contents~~. It does not include a value of a descriptor length field itself. A ~~"generation ID"~~ generation ID represents ~~the a version of the an~~ AV/C command set. As illustrated in FIG. 12, its value is at present "00h" ("h" expresses the hexadecimal representation). This "00h" means that data structures and command sets are version 3.0 of the "AV/C General Specification. Also, as illustrated in FIG. 12, all other values than the value "00h" are reserved for future specification.

[0100] A "size of list ID" represents the number of bytes in a list ID. A "size of object ID" represents the number of bytes in an object ID. A "size of object position" represents the position in the list (the number of bytes) which is used in case referred to when performing the control. A "number of root object lists" represents the number of root object lists. A "root object list id" represents an ID for identifying the uppermost root object lists in the respective independent hierarchies.

[0101] A "subunit dependent length" represents the number of bytes in the succeeding "subunit dependent information" field. The "subunit dependent information" is a field which indicates information peculiar to the relevant function. A "manufacturer dependent length" indicates the number of bytes in the succeeding "manufacturer dependent information" field. The "manufacturer dependent information" is a field which indicates specification information on the relevant vendor (maker). It is noted that when the descriptor has no "manufacturer dependent information", this field does not exist.

[0102] FIG. 13 illustrates the assignment ranges of the list IDs illustrated in FIG. 11. As illustrated in FIG. 13, the ranges "0000h to 0FFFh" and "4000h to FFFFh" each are

reserved as the assignment ranges for future specification. "1000h to 3FFFh" and "10000h to max list ID value" are prepared for identifying dependent information on the subunit type.

[0103] Next, the AV/C command set used in the system of this embodiment will be described with reference to Figs. 14 to 19. FIG. 14 illustrates a stack model of the AV/C command set. As illustrated in FIG. 14, a physical layer 81, link layer 82, transaction layer 83, and serial bus management 84 are based on the IEEE1394. An FCP (Function Control Protocol) 85 is based on the IEC61883. An AV/C command set 86 is based on the 1394TA spec.

[0104] FIG. 15 is a diagram illustrating the command and response of the FCP85 in FIG. 14. The FCP is a protocol for controlling the AV apparatus under the IEEE1394. As illustrated in FIG. 15, the controlling side is a controller while the controlled side is a target. The transmission of a FCP command or the response thereto is performed between the nodes using a write transaction during the asynchronous communication under the IEEE1394 standard. The target which receives data returns an acknowledge (ACK) signal to the controller for confirmation of that reception.

[0105] FIG. 16 is a diagram illustrating in more detail the relationship between the command and response of FCP illustrated in FIG. 15. A node A and a node B are connected to each other via the IEEE1394 bus. The node A is the controller and the node B is the target. ~~In each of the nodes~~ Both node A and B have a command register and a response register ~~each having~~ are have 512 bytes ~~prepared each respectively~~. As illustrated in FIG. 16, the controller writes a command message into the command register 93 of the target and thereby transmits a relevant command. Also, conversely, the target writes a response message into the response register 92 of the controller and it thereby

transmits a relevant response. For these two messages, exchange of control information is performed. The kind of the command set which is sent by the FCP are described in an area "CTS" in the data field of FIG. 17 as later described below.

[0106] FIG. 17 illustrates the data structure of the packets which are transmitted in the asynchronous transmission mode of the AV/C command. The AV/C command set is the one for controlling the AV device in which CTS (the command set ID) = "0000". The AV/C command frame and response frame are transmitted/received between the nodes through the use of the FCP. In order to cause no burden on the bus and AV device, it is designed that the response to the command is made within a time length of 100 ms. As illustrated in FIG. 17, the data of the asynchronous packet is comprised of 32 bits (=1 quadlet) in the horizontal direction. The upper stage in the figure represents a header part, while the lower stage thereof represents a data block. An area "destination_ID" indicates the relevant destination.

[0107] The "CTS" represents the ID of the command set. In case of the AV/C command set, the CTS = "0000". When the packet is a command, a "ctype/response" field indicates the functional classification of that command—and. When the packet is a response, the "ctype/response" field indicates the processed results of the relevant command. The commands are roughly classified into the following four kinds of definitions. (1) commands for controlling the functions from the outside (CONTROL), (2) commands for inquiring about the relevant status from the outside (STATUS), (3) commands for inquiring from the outside about the presence or absence of supporting the relevant control command (GENERAL INQUIRY (the presence or absence of the for-use-for-support opcode)) and (SPECIFIC INQUIRY (the presence or absence of supporting opcode and operands)), and (4) commands for requesting to

notify a change in the status to be notified to the outside (NOTIFY).

[0108] A response is returned ~~depending on~~according to the kind of command. The response to the "CONTROL" command includes "NOT IMPLEMENTED", "ACCEPTED", "REJECTED", and "INTERIM". The response to the "STATUS" command includes "NOT IMPLEMENTED", "REJECTED", "IN TRANSITION", or "STABLE". The response to the "GENERAL INQUIRY" / "SPECIFIC INQUIRY" commands is "IMPLEMENTED" and "NOT IMPLEMENTED". The response to the "NOTIFY" command includes "NOT IMPLEMENTED", "REJECTED", "INTERIM", and "CHANGED".

[0109] A "subunit type" area is provided for specifying the functions within the device and, for example, a tape recorder/player, a tuner, etc area assigned therein. To distinguish between the subunits if there are a plurality of subunits of the same kind, addressing is performed using the subunit ids as identification numbers. The "opcode" represents commands while the "operand" represents the parameters of each command. "Additional operands" is a field which is added if necessary. A field "padding" is also what is added if necessary. A field "data CRC (Cyclic Redundancy Check)" is used for error check in data transmission.

[0110] FIGS. 18A to 18C illustrate specific examples of the AV/C commands. FIG. 18A illustrates specific examples of the "ctype/response" field. The upper stage in the figure represents commands while the lower stage therein represents ~~in~~-responses. "0000" is assigned the command "CONTROL". ; ~~In~~-"0001" is assigned the command "STATUS". ; ~~In~~-"0010" is assigned ~~thereto~~ the command "SPECIFIC INQUIRY". ; ~~In~~-"0011" is assigned ~~thereto~~ the command "NOTIFY". ; ~~In~~-"0100" is assigned ~~thereto~~ the command "GENERAL INQUIRY". ; and "0101" to "0111" are reserved for future specification. Also, ~~in~~ "1000" is assigned the response "NOT IMPLEMENTED". ; ~~In~~ "1001" is assigned the response "ACCEPTED". ; ~~In~~-"1010" is

assigned the response "REJECTED".____"; In "1011" is assigned the response "IN TRANSITION".____"; "1101" the response "CHANGED".____"; "1100" the response "IMPLEMENTED/STABLE".____"; In "1111" is assigned the response "INTERIM".____"; and "1110" is reserved for future specification.

[0111] FIG. 18B illustrates specific examples of the "subunit type". In "00000", "00011", "00100", "00101", "00111", "11100", and "11110" are assigned "Video Monitor", "Disc recorder/Player", "Tape recorder/Player", "Tuner", "Video Camera", "Vendor unique", and "Subunit type extended to next byte", respectively. Additionally, ~~although has~~while "unit" is assigned in "11111", ~~this it is used in the case it is sent of sending to the apparatus itself. An example thereof is, such as turning the power "on" or "off" of the power supply.~~

[0112] FIG. 18C illustrates specific examples of the "opcode" commands. For each subunit type there exists an "opcode" table. Herein, there is illustrated the "opcode" table when the subunit type is "Tape recorder/Player". For each opcode, operand is defined. In the op codes "00h", "50h", "51h", "52h", "60h", "61h", "62h", "C1h", "C2h", "C3h", and "C4h" are herein assigned the operands "VENDOR-DEPENDENT", "SEARCH MODE", "TIMECODE", "ATN", "OPEN MIC", "READ MIC", "WRITE MIC", "LOAD MEDIUM", "RECORD", "PLAY", AND "WIND", respectively.

[0113] FIGS. 19A to 19B illustrate specific examples of the AV/C command and the response thereto. For example, when instructing a playing device as a target (consumer) on playback, the controller sends a command such as shown in FIG. 19A to the target. This command is CTS "0000" because of using the AV/C command set. Because the command (CONTROL) for controlling the device from the outside is used, ctype = "0000" (see FIG. 18A). Because the subunit type is "Tape recorder/Player", it is pre-determined that "subunit type" =

"00100" (see FIG. 18B). As the "id" represents a case where it is ID0 and therefore id = 000. ~~As regards the~~The "opcode", ~~it~~ is "C3h" which means the reproduction (see FIG. 18C). The "operand" is "75h" which means "FORWARD". When played back, the target returns a response such as that shown in FIG. 19B to the controller. Because the response is herein "accepted" which means the acceptance, response = "1001" (see FIG. 18A). Except for the "response", others are the same as those in FIG. 19A. Therefore, the description will be omitted.

[0114] Referring to FIG. 1 again, it is assumed that the first control device 1 ~~(DTV1)~~ ~~(10)~~ 10, second control device 2 ~~(DTV2)~~ ~~(20)~~ 20, and information device ~~(DVD player)~~ 1 each have an asynchronous read request as the ~~device-~~peculiardevice-unique information acquirement means.

[0115] Also, it is assumed that the first control device 1 ~~(DTV1)~~ ~~(10)~~ 10 is equipped, as the information device notification ~~means~~unit, with a GUI as illustrated in FIG. 20 (hereinafter referred to as "a device GUI"). ~~In~~As shown in FIG. 20, ~~it is illustrated that the followings are connected~~ via a network 25, company A DTV1 ~~(21)~~ 21, company A DVD Player 22, company B DVD Player 23, and company B DTV2 ~~(24)~~ 24 are connected via a network 25.

[0116] Also, ~~it is assumed that the~~ information device ~~(DVD player)~~ 1 is equipped, ~~as the controlled-portion notification means,~~ with a GUI as ~~that~~ illustrated in FIG. 20 (hereinafter referred to as "a controlled-portion GUI"). ~~In~~As shown in FIG. 20, ~~it is illustrated that a~~ company A DVD Player 31 contains a DVD Disc 1 ~~(32)~~ Disc1 32 and a DVD Disc 2 ~~(33)~~ Disc2 33.

[0117] ~~Specifically, when~~When the company A DVD Player 22 ~~in FIG. 20~~ is selected using a remote controller 41 ~~illustrated in FIG. 22~~ (FIG. 22), ~~it is indicated as shown in~~ FIG. 21 ~~that the~~ company A DVD Player 31 has, as its

subordinate sub-units, the DVD ~~Disc 1 (32)~~Disc1 32 and the DVD ~~Disc 2 (33)~~Disc2 33.

[0118] In ~~FIG. 20, the~~The remote controller 41 (FIG. 22) has control buttons 42 including a playback button 43, buttons for stop, fast forwarding, rewinding, and the like. It also has a selected object execution button 48 for executing an item selected by means of an upper button 44, lower button 45, right button 46, and left button 47. Further, it has an information device notification ~~means~~unit display button 49 as described below.

[0119] Also, it is assumed that the first control device (DTV1) ~~(10)~~10 includes a display 15 (FIG. 1) which is a device for displaying the GUI serving as the information device notification ~~means~~unit and controlled-portion notification ~~means~~unit.

[0120] Moreover, the controlled-portion GUI possessed by the information device ~~(DVD player)~~1 is displayed as follows. A device is selected on the device GUI, and ~~this~~the selected information is transmitted to the information device ~~(DVD player)~~1. Then, the information device ~~(DVD player)~~1 produces data on the controlled-portion GUI, and transmits the data to the first control device ~~1 (DTV1)~~(10) 10. Thus, the controlled-portion GUI is displayed on the display 15 of the first control device ~~1 (DTV1)~~(10) 10.

[0121] The first control device ~~1 (DTV1)~~(10) 10 is equipped with ~~the following~~a user's operation converting section 16 ~~as the~~comprising a controlled-portion transmission ~~selection means~~selector and controlled-portion transmission ~~control means~~controller. The user's operation converting section 16 receives information on the user's operation of the remote controller 17, interprets that operation and converts it into a pass-through command. ~~The pass-through command is issued from the interface 12. This means the~~The user's operation converting section 16 ~~has a function of issuing such~~

~~command~~ then issues the pass-through command from the interface 12.

[0122] Furthermore, the user's operation converting section 16 is arranged to have another function of displaying the device GUI when it receives a signal generated by the operation of the information device notification ~~means~~ unit display button 49 of the remote controller 41 shown in FIG. 22.

[0123] In addition, the user's operation converting section 16 is arranged to have another function of updating the device GUI. Specifically, when the device GUI is ~~being~~ displayed, if the section 16 receives the information resulting from the user's operation of the remote controller 17, it interprets that operation and updates the device GUI, ~~rather than~~ interpreting that user's operation and converting it into the pass-through command.

[0124] Moreover, the user's operation converting section 16 is arranged to have the following function. When a device GUI is ~~being~~ displayed and a device has been selected, if the section 16 has ~~receives~~ received a signal resulting from the operation of the selected object execution button 48 of the remote controller 41 in FIG. 22, it transmits a request to display the controlled-portion GUI (hereinafter referred to as "the controlled-portion GUI display request") to the information device ~~(DVD player)~~ 1 via the interface 12.

[0125] Furthermore, the information device ~~(DVD player)~~ 1 is arranged to have the following function. When having received the controlled-portion GUI display request from the first control device ~~1 (DTV1) (10)~~ 10, the information device 1 transmits data on the controlled-portion GUI to the first control device ~~1 (DTV1) (10)~~ 10.

[0126] In addition, the first control device ~~(DTV1) (10)~~ 10 includes ~~the following elements for making a display on the display 15 when receiving the data on the controlled portion~~

GUI. ~~A a CPU2 (11)~~11 for performing the control of that display, a ~~ROM 2 (14)~~ROM2 14 for storing a control program therefor, and a ~~RAM 2 (13)~~RAM2 13 for a working area for making a display on the display 15 when receiving the data on the controlled-portion GUI.

[0127] Also, the information device ~~(DVD player)~~1 has a ~~RAM 1 (5)~~RAM1 5 storing a control correspondence table 51 ~~in such form as illustrated in FIG. 23~~(FIG. 23) as the control correspondence table. In FIG. 23, the control correspondence table 51 shows that a DVD ~~Disc 1 (53)~~Disc1 53 corresponds to a company A ~~DTV 1 (52)~~DTV1 52 and a DVD ~~Disc 2 (55)~~Disc2 55 corresponds to a company A ~~DTV 2 (54)~~DTV2 54.

[0128] Moreover, the information device ~~(DVD player)~~1 includes ~~the following two DVD software playback deck parts. One is the a~~ a DVD playback deck ~~part 1 (3)~~3 capable of reproducing a DVD software 4 in which information on controlled-portion 1 is recorded. ~~The other is the and a~~ and a DVD playback deck ~~part 2 (7)~~7 capable of reproducing DVD software 8 in which information on controlled-portion 2 is recorded.

[0129] Furthermore, the information device ~~(DVD player)~~1 includes the following elements so that, when having received a ~~pass-through~~pass-through command, the device can ~~give an~~ effect ~~of the~~ command on the controlled-portion corresponding to the issuer of the command by referring to the control correspondence table 51. A ~~CPU 1 (2)~~CPU1 2 for performing the control for that purpose, a ~~ROM 1 (6)~~ROM1 6 storing a control program therefor, and a ~~RAM 1 (5)~~RAM1 5 for a work area.

[0130] The operation will be described below.

[0131] A control flow therefor is illustrated in FIG. 24.

[0132] ~~Premising the above-described points, the~~The control device 61 and the information device 62 are connected first with each other via communication means in accordance with the IEEE 1394 communication format to form a network. In this case, ~~it is assumed that~~ the information device 62 is a DVD

player, and the control device 61 includes a DTV1 10 and a DTV2 20.

[0133] ~~Now, it assumed that the~~The control device 61 issues the asynchronous read request C1 to the information device 62 and the information device 62 issues the asynchronous read request C2 to the control device 61. At a time point T1, the control device 61, ~~gets~~acquires the ~~device-peculiar~~device-unique information on the information device 62 connected to the network and retains the acquired information in the ~~RAM 2 (13)~~RAM2 13 illustrated in FIG. 1. At a time point T11, the information device 62, acquires the ~~device-peculiar~~device-unique information on the control device 61 connected to the network and retains the acquired information in the ~~RAM 1 (5)~~RAM1 5 illustrated in FIG. 1.

[0134] ~~In case~~When the user controls the DVD player 1 of the information device 62 via the ~~DTV 1~~DTV1 10 of the control device 61, the following operation is performed. When, in the ~~DTV 1~~DTV1 10 of the control device 61, the information device notification ~~means~~unit display button 49 of the remote controller 41 ~~illustrated in FIG. 22~~(FIG. 22) is operated, the resulting signal ~~due to that operation~~ is transmitted to the user's operation converting section 16 of the DTV1 10 of FIG. 1. ~~That~~The resulting signal is interpreted ~~there~~. ~~At in the~~ user's operation converting section 16 and at a time point T2, the device GUI is displayed on the display 15.

[0135] ~~When, in~~In the DTV1 10 of the control device 61, ~~by~~ the operation of the upper button 44, lower button 45, right button 46, and left button 47 of the remote controller 41 ~~of FIG. 22 is selected~~(FIG. 22) selects the DVD player 1 of the information device 62 displayed on the device GUI, and the following operation is performed. For each said selection, the resulting signal ~~due to this selecting operation~~ is transmitted to the user's operation converting section 16 of the DTV1 10 ~~illustrated in FIG. 1~~(FIG. 1). ~~That~~The resulting

signal is interpreted ~~therein~~ the user's operation converting section 16. Then, the device GUI on the display 15 is updated.

[0136] Next, when in the DTV1_10 of the control device 61, the selected object execution button 48 of the remote controller 41 ~~of FIG. 22~~(FIG. 22) is operated in a state where the DVD player_1 of the information device 62 is selected, at a time point T3, the resulting signal ~~due to that selection is~~ transmitted to the user's operation converting section 16 of the DTV1_10 (FIG. 1) ~~illustrated in FIG. 1.~~ That ~~The~~ resulting signal is interpreted ~~therein~~ the user's operation converting section 16. Then, the controlled-portion GUI display request C3 is transmitted to the DVD player_1 of the information device 62 via the interface 12.

[0137] At a time point T12, the DVD player_1 of the information device 62 which has received the controlled-portion GUI display request C3 prepares controlled-portion GUI data C4. It then transmits the controlled-portion GUI data C4 to the DTV1_10 of the control device 61 via the interface 9.

[0138] At a time point T4, the DTV1_10 of the control device 61 based on the controlled-portion GUI data C4 received, makes a GUI display, at a point in time T4, of the GUI data of the controlled-portion on the display 15.

[0139] When, in the DTV1_10 of the control device 61, at a time point T5, the user performs his selecting operation using the upper button 44, lower button 45, right button 46, and left button 47 on the remote controller 41 ~~of FIG. 4~~(FIG. 4) and the DVD ~~Dise~~Disc 53 of the information device 62 displayed on the controlled-portion GUI is selected, ~~each time that selecting operation,~~ the resulting signal ~~due to the operation is~~ transmitted to the user's operation converting section 16 of the ~~DTV1~~ DTV1_10 ~~illustrated in FIG. 1~~(FIG. 1). That ~~The~~ resulting signal is interpreted ~~therein~~ the user's operation converting section 16. Then, the pass

~~through~~pass-through command C5 corresponding to ~~that~~the resulting signal is issued to the DVD player₁ of the information device 62.

[0140] In response thereto, at a time point T13, the DVD player₁ of the information device 62, prepares the controlled-portion GUI data C6. ~~It~~The DVD player 1 then transmits the controlled-portion GUI data C6 to the DTV1₁₀ of the control device 61 via the interface 9.

[0141] At a time point T6, the DTV1₁₀ of the control device 61 updates the controlled-portion GUI on the display 15.

[0142] When, in the DTV1₁₀ of the control device 61, the user operates the selected object execution button 48 of the remote controller 41 ~~of FIG. 22~~(FIG. 22), in a state where the DVD Disc1 displayed on the ~~portion to be controlled~~controlled-portion GUI is selected at a point T7. Then, through this user's operation, the resulting signal ~~due to the operation~~ is transmitted to the user's operation converting section 16 of the DTV1₁₀ ~~illustrated in FIG. 1~~ (FIG. 1). ~~That~~The resulting signal is interpreted ~~therein~~ the user's operation converting section 16. Then, the ~~passthrough~~pass-through command C7 corresponding to ~~that~~the resulting signal is issued to the DVD player₁ of the information device 62.

[0143] On this occasion, not only is the selected information indicating that the selection has been made ~~is not only~~ transmitted to the DVD player₁ of the information device 62 via the interface 12, but also the identification information on the control device itself having made that selection of the company A DTV1₅₂" is also transmitted in such a form as affixed to the ~~passthrough~~pass-through command C7.

[0144] At a time point T14, the DVD player₁ of the information device 62 having received the ~~passthrough~~

pass-through command C7, preserves the following identification information on the control device itself having selected the company A DTV1 52 and the identification information on the controlled-portion being selected of DVD Disc1 53 in two pieces of identification information the RAM-1 (5)RAM1 5 as the control correspondence table 51 illustrated in FIG. 23 (FIG. 23).—One is, the identification information on the control device itself having selected of the company A DTV1" (52) and the other is the identification information on the controlled portion being selected of DVD Disc1 (53).

[0145] At this moment, suppose that the DVD Disc 2 (55) that is the identification selected information on the controlled-portion for DVD Disc2 55 has already been selected by the company A DTV 2" (54)DTV2 54 of the control device 61. Then, it makes that, at a time point T14, the control correspondence table 51 as illustrated in FIG. 23 (FIG. 23) is preserved in the RAM-1 (5)RAM1 5 of the DVD player₁ of the information device 62.

[0146] Next, in the DTV1₁₀ of the control device 61, at a time point T8, the control button 42 of the remote controller 41 illustrated in FIG. 22 (FIG. 22) is operated. The resulting signal due to the operation is transmitted to and interpreted at the user's operation converting section 16 of the DTV1₁₀ illustrated in FIG. 1 (FIG. 1). That signal is interpreted there.—Then, the ~~passthrough~~ pass-through command C8 corresponding to that the resulting signal is issued to the DVD player₁ of the information device 62. As a result, this ~~passthrough~~ the pass-through command is transmitted to the interface 9 of the DVD player₁ of the information device 62 via the interface 12 of the ~~DTV-1~~DTV1₁₀ of the control device 61.

[0147] In this case, it is assumed that the control button 42 which is operated at this moment is the playback button 43 is operated for playing back the DVD disc. Then,

~~the command which is a play command is issued to the DVD player_1 of the information device 62 is a play command among the passthrough-pass-through command. On this occasion, the passthrough-pass-through command C8 has also has the identification information on the control device_10 itself making relevant control, of the company A DTV 1.~~

[0148] At a time point T15, the DVD player_1 of the information device 62 having received the passthrough pass-through command C8, can get the identification information on the issuer thereof as the company A DTV1_52. Therefore, that DVD player_1, determine ~~can know, by referring to the control correspondence table 51 illustrated in FIG. 23, that the company A DTV 1 (52) DTV1 52 corresponds to the DVD Disc 1 (53) Disc1 53 by referring to the control correspondence table 51 (FIG. 23).~~

[0149] Accordingly, the DVD player_1 of the information device 62 ~~decides that the issuer of~~ issued the "play"play command ~~being the passthrough being C8 is the DVD Disc 1 Disc1 53. Then, it reproduces the DVD software 4 which is stored in the DVD Disc 1 Disc1 53 of the DVD playback deck part 1 (3) part1 3.~~

~~{Passthrough command}~~

[0150] An outline of the passthrough-pass-through command which is applied to the controlled-portion transmission ~~control means~~ controller of this embodiment will now be described.

[0151] The controlled-portion transmission ~~control means~~ controller causes the control device to transmit the control request ~~to made by the user, to the information device via the communication means as a control request.~~ The information device which receives this request controls its controlled-portion.

[0152] The passthrough-pass-through command ~~(Passthrough command) as one is an~~ example of the controlled-portion

~~transmission~~transmission-controller and ~~control means~~ is prescribed by the AV/C commands (AV/C Panel Sub-unit Model and Command Set). The ~~passthrough~~pass-through command ~~commands~~ is given, in a unified form to the information device having a plurality of ~~portions to be controlled~~controlled-portions without indicting the destination.

[0153] FIG. 25 is a diagram illustrating a format of the ~~passthrough~~pass-through command.

[0154] The ~~passthrough~~pass-through command is used to suitably transmit the user's operation to the target from the controller. The ~~passthrough~~pass-through command is transferred from the controller regardless of the state of the target.

[0155] In FIG. 25, a ~~numeral 71 denotes~~"PASS THROUGH (7C16)" as 71 is an operation code (opcode), and. A ~~numeral 72 denotes a state flag indicating~~72 indicates the state of user's operation of the remote controller, as well as an operation ID (operation id) indicating an identification code corresponding to the user's operation, as an operand (operand) "0". A ~~numeral 73 denotes an~~An operation data field length ~~indicating~~73 indicates the length of the operation data field, as an operand "1". A ~~numeral 74 denotes~~operationOperation data ~~(operation data)~~74 indicates ~~indicating~~contents of the operation data, as the operand (operand) "2" and thereafter.

~~{IEEE 1394 serial bus}~~

[0156] An outline of the IEEE 1394 serial bus (hereinafter referred to as "the 1394 serial bus") which is applied to the interface of this embodiment will further be described.

[0157] ~~First of all, its mode of connection will be described.~~In the 1394 serial bus, the mode of connection has a limitation imposed thereupon. By ~~the~~connecting respective devices like a tree without loop, sixty-three devices at maximum can be connected to a single bus. The port of each

device transmits its received data signal continuously to the other ports, with the result that the data signal is propagated through the whole bus.

[0158] ~~Next, a description will be given of the cable.~~ The cable is constructed of two pair of differential signal lines TPA, TPB, a power source pair of VG (ground) and VP (power source). By means of two signal lines of the TPA and TPB are performed dynamic configuration of the bus, arbitration for procuring the right to use the bus, and propagation of data signal. To the TPA is always applied a bias voltage, and the TPB determines the presence or absence of the active cable connection by detecting the bias application.

[0159] Next, a description will be given of signals of the physical layer section. The two signal lines of TPA and TPB each take three values of "1", "0", and "Z". The value "Z" represents a state of high impedance in which the signal lines are not driven by any one of their connected ports. From the TPA is transmitted a signal called "a strobe" while from the TPB is transmitted data. On the receiving side, the data and the strobe are exclusive-ORed to obtain a clock signal and the data is read out at a point of transition in the clock signal.

[0160] ~~Next, a description will be given of the bus initialization.~~ Each port detects the presence or absence of the bias which the TPA of a connection partner outputs to thereby determine whether a node is connected or disconnected. The node having detected a change in the connected state of port transmits a bus-reset signal for a prescribed period of time to another port connected thereto. The node having received it transmits a bus-reset signal to still another port connected thereto. This is repeated and finally the bus reset signal is transmitted to all connected nodes. Each node having received the bus-reset signal clears its previous form information, and its own node ID, etc. Thereafter, each node itself recognizes whether it is branch node or leaf node.

Specifically, it is recognized whether each node connected to the bus is a branch in a state of being connected to a plurality of adjacent nodes, or whether each node is a leaf whose adjacent node is only one in number. Further, a parent-child relationship is determined with regard to each node, and a root node in the tree structure is determined.

[0161] ~~Next, an asynchronous communication will be described again.~~ AsAn asynchronous communication is one of the methods for transferring a data packet used in the 1394 interface, ~~there is an asynchronous communication.~~ This is a unidirectional data packet transfer. The transmitting side expressly specifies a data packet transfer destination address in a packet header and transmits this data to the bus. The data packet propagates up to every node on the bus. The node which corresponds to the transfer destination address expressly indicated in the packet header receives that data packet, and returns a received result (ack). This series of transfer steps is called "an asynchronous subaction".

[0162] In this connection, in order to start the asynchronous subaction, the bus must be in a state of being idle for a prescribed period of time called "a subaction gap". Also, while the receiving side receives a data packet and returns the ack, the bus is in a state of being idle, ~~too.~~ This interval is called "an ack gap". Because the ack gap is sufficiently short as compared with the subaction gap, it never happens that other subactions are started.

[0163] ~~Next, an isochronous communication will be described again.~~ As anotherAnother method of the methods of for transferring a data packet ~~that are used in the 1394 interface,~~ there is an isochronous communication. The isochronous communication is performed in synchronism with a cycle start packet that is transmitted at prescribed intervals by a cycle master, a piece of which exists on the bus. When receiving the cycle start packet, the node on the transmitting

side of the isochronous communication starts arbitration after an isochronous gap passed and transmits an isochronous packet. In case there exists any other transmitting node, arbitration is subsequently started after the isochronous gap passed, and this node transmits the isochronous packet.

[0164] In this case, this isochronous gap is arranged to have a sufficiently short period of time as compared with the ~~sub-action~~subaction gap. Therefore, even if, during this period of time, there is any node that desires to make the asynchronous communication, no transmission can be made because that node cannot detect the subaction gap. In other words, for each cycle, the priority is given to the node that transmits the isochronous packet. The isochronous communication is performed in such a manner that data are broadcast into the bus without specifying the address of data transfer destination unlike ~~the case of~~in an asynchronous communication. The isochronous packets each have a channel number of from 0 to 63 allotted thereto. So, the node needs only to receive the isochronous packet of a necessary channel number.

~~{Modifications}~~

[0165] In the above-described embodiment, only one example is shown, in which a plurality of control devices and a single information device are connected with each other to form a network. The present invention, however, is not limited thereto. The invention can also be applied to a case where a plurality of control devices and a plurality of information devices are connected with each other to form a network. In this case, the control correspondence table which is produced in an information device may be transferred to another information device for use therein.

[0166] In the above-described embodiment, ~~an example is shown, in which~~ the control correspondence table is used within the information device. However, the present invention

is not limited thereto. ~~It may be arranged that the~~The control correspondence table ~~is may be~~ transferred to ~~some one~~ control device and ~~it is indicated by the~~ other control device will indicate that the information device ~~is in a state of being occupied.~~

[0167] In the above-described embodiment, an example is shown, in which the ~~device-peculiar~~device-unique information is acquired at the time of initializing the network. However, the present invention is not limited thereto. It may also be arranged as follows. The controlled portion information acquirement, ~~means is not executed at the network-initializing time, but is~~ may be executed at the time when the information device ~~being an object~~ is selected by the information device ~~selection means~~selector.

[0168] In the above-described embodiment, ~~an example is shown, in which the~~ information device ~~selection means~~selector selects an information device from the information shown in the device GUI in the control device using the remote controller. The present invention, however, is not limited thereto. The selection may be made using the ~~passthrough~~ pass-through command.

[0169] In the above-described embodiment, ~~an example is shown, in which a~~ device is selected using the information device ~~selection means~~selector in the control device, ~~thereby making calling~~ the controlled portion notification unit ~~means to be called.~~ However, the present invention is not limited thereto. The calling of the controlled-portion notification ~~means~~ unit may be made using the ~~passthrough~~ pass-through command.

[0170] Also, in the above-described embodiment, ~~an example is shown, in which the~~ IEEE 1394 format is used for the interface. However, the present invention is not limited thereto. The ~~ether~~ USB (Universal Serial Bus) may be used therefor.

[0171] Also, in the above-described embodiment, ~~an example is shown in which a~~ digital television receiver is used as the control device. However, the present invention is not limited thereto. A digital video tape recorder, a set top box, or a router may be used so long as it has a similar structure, operation, function and effect.

[0172] Also, in the above-described embodiment, ~~an example is shown, in which the~~ communication means has the network formed by a wired connection through the IEEE 1394 interface. However, the present invention is not limited thereto. The ~~control network~~ may be made from each of a plurality of control devices connected by a wireless connection using a wireless interface. Further, the wireless communication may be such that, using the Bluetooth method, the control request is wirelessly made at a distance of several meters or so from each of a plurality of control devices. Moreover, the wireless communication may be such that, using an infrared ray method, the control request is made from each of a plurality of control devices based on the infrared ray method to thereby form a wireless LAN (Local Area Network). By doing so, the controlled-portion correlated with the relevant control device will be made to operate appropriately.

[0173] In the above-described embodiment, ~~an example is shown, in which the~~ user employs the control device such as a digital television receiver. However, the present invention is not limited thereto. A portable telephone may be employed therefor.

~~{Effect of the Invention}~~

[0174] The information control method according to the present invention is intended as follows. When the control device selects the controlled-portion which it wants to control using the selector ~~from means for selecting the controlled-portion which is provided by the information device to the control device,~~ the selected information itself and

identification information ~~on the control device having~~ of the selected ~~the~~ controlled-portion are transmitted to the information device; the information device ~~having received the selected information and the identification information on the control device~~ causes, ~~in its inventor,~~ identification information on the selected controlled-portion ~~selected~~ and identification information on the control device to correspond to each other and preserves ~~the both~~ the selected information and the identification information as a control correspondence table; each time the control device selects the controlled-portion, the selection, the transmission, and the preservation are repeatedly performed; and when the information device receives a control request from the control device, the information device controls by referring to the control correspondence table, the controlled-portion corresponding to the identification information on the issuer of the control request. Therefore, according to this information control system, the information device is provided with a structure which can preserve the control correspondence table, with the result that, even if a control command which the control device issues to the information device has therein no destination of the controlled-portion being an object of control, the information device can advantageously refer to the control correspondence table on receipt of control requests from a plurality of control devices. As a result, the information device can, by this referring, advantageously detect the controlled-portion associated with the control device and can determine that the detected portion is what the control device wants to control. Thus, the information device can advantageously make the controlled-portion operate properly.

[0175] Moreover, ~~this~~ the information control method according to the present invention uses, as described above, ~~the communication means that is~~ an IEEE 1394 digital

interface. Therefore, by referring to the ~~device-peculiar~~device-unique information used in the IEEE 1394 format, the information device can advantageously detect the controlled-portion which is associated with the relevant control device.

[0176] Furthermore, this information control method according to the present invention uses, as described above, ~~the means for selecting the controlled-portion and the means for controlling the controlled-portion~~ controller which are both based on the use of the ~~passthrough~~pass-through command defined by the AV/C Panel Subunit Model and Command Set. Therefore, by using the ~~passthrough~~pass-through command that is given to the information device in a unified form without affixing addresses to a plurality of controlled-portions, the information device side can decide the controlled-portion and interpret the user's operation. This advantageously allows the control device to control or select the information device.

[0177] In addition, ~~this~~the information control method according to the present invention includes, as described above, the information device which can reproduce software information recorded in the digital versatile disc. Therefore, the information device can advantageously detect, with respect to the reproduction portions of the digital versatile disc being a plurality of controlled-portions, the controlled-portion associated with the relevant control device. On the other hand, the control device can advantageously control or select the information device.

[0178] Also, ~~this~~the information control method according to the present invention uses, as described above, the ~~communication means which is an interface by~~a wireless interface. Therefore, by making a control request from each of a plurality of control devices ~~by wireless~~, it is advantageously possible to cause the controlled-portion

associated with the relevant control device to operate properly.

[0179] Moreover, this information control method according to the present invention uses, as described above, wireless communication of a Bluetooth method. Therefore, by making a wireless control request from each of a plurality of control devices ~~by wireless~~ at a distance of several meters or so, it is advantageously possible to cause the controlled-portion associated with the relevant control device to operate appropriately.

[0180] Furthermore, ~~this~~ the information control method according to the present invention uses, as described above, wireless communication of an infrared ray method. Therefore, by making a control request from each of a plurality of control devices using the infrared ray method, it is advantageously possible to cause the controlled portion associated with the relevant control device to operate properly.

[0181] In addition, ~~this~~ the information control method according to the present invention includes, as described above, the information device which can reproduce audio/visual information recorded in a hard disc. Therefore, by expansion decoding the audio/visual information recorded in the compression-coded form for reproduction, the information device can advantageously detect, with respect to the reproduction portions of the hard disc regarding the audio/visual information being a plurality of controlled-portions, the controlled-portion associated with the relevant control device. On the other hand, the control device can advantageously control or select the information device.

[0182] Also, ~~this~~ the information control method according to the present invention includes, as described above, ~~the control device which is~~ a digital television receiver capable of receiving digital broadcast. Therefore, by making a

control request from each of the digital television receivers being a plurality of control devices, it is advantageously possible to cause the controlled-portion associated with the relevant control device to operate appropriately.

[0183] Moreover, the information processing apparatus according to the present invention comprises: a plurality of ~~portions to be controlled~~controlled-portions which can be controlled by the control device; ~~transmitting means~~a transmitter for providing ~~selection means~~a selector to the control device in order that the control device can select a ~~portion to be controlled~~controlled-portion which it wants to control; ~~receiving means~~a receiver for receiving information ~~itself which is~~ selected by the ~~selection means~~selector and identification information ~~on~~of the control device ~~having that selected the~~ ~~portion to be controlled~~controlled-portion; ~~preserving means~~unit for preserving the identification information on the ~~portion to be controlled~~selected controlled-portion which is selected and the identification information ~~on~~of the control device as a control correspondence table in which ~~the both~~ types of information are in correspondence with each other; and ~~control means~~a controller in which, each time the control device selects the ~~portion to be controlled~~controlled-portion, the provision of the ~~selection means~~selector, the reception made by the ~~receiving means~~receiver, and the preservation made by the ~~preserving means~~unit are repeatedly performed, and which, when the ~~receiving means~~receiver receives a control request from the control device, by referring to the control correspondence table which is preserved, controls the ~~portion to be controlled~~controlled-portion which corresponds to the identification information on an issuer of the control request. Therefore, according to this information processing apparatus, the information device has such a structure ~~as can preserve that preserves~~ the control correspondence table. As

a result, even if the control command issued to the information device ~~issued by the control device holds no destination of~~ contains no information concerning the portion to be controlled being an object of control, selected controlled-portion the information device can advantageously refer to the control correspondence table upon receipt of the control requests from a plurality of control devices. As a result, the information device can, ~~by this referring,~~ advantageously detect the ~~portion to be controlled~~ controlled-portion which is associated with that control device and can determine that the ~~detected portion~~ controlled-portion is what the control device ~~wants~~ seeks to control. It is thus advantageously possible to construct the information device which makes that controlled-portion operate appropriately.

[0184] Furthermore, the information control system according to the present invention includes the following control device and information device. The control device has ~~selection means~~ selector for selecting the ~~portion to be controlled~~ controlled-portion and control ~~request means~~ requester for making a request to control the selected ~~portion to be controlled~~ controlled-portion. The information device has: a plurality of ~~portions to be controlled~~ controlled-portions which can be controlled by the control device; ~~transmitting means~~ a transmitter for providing ~~selection means~~ a selector to the control device in order that the control device can select a ~~portion to be controlled~~ controlled-portion which it ~~wants~~ to control; ~~receiving means~~ a receiver for receiving information ~~itself~~ selected by the ~~selection means~~ selector and identification information on the control device having selected the ~~portion to be controlled~~ controlled-portion; ~~preserving means~~ preserving unit for preserving the identification information on the ~~portion to be controlled~~ controlled-portion which is

selected and the identification information on the control device as a control correspondence table in which the both information types are in correspondence with each other; and ~~control means~~ a controller in which, each time the control device selects the ~~portion to be controlled~~ controlled-portion, the provision of the ~~selection means~~ selector, the reception made by the ~~receiving means~~ receiver, and the preservation made by the ~~preserving means~~ preserving unit are repeatedly performed, and which, when the ~~receiving means~~ receiver receives a control request from the control device, by referring to the control correspondence table which is preserved, controls the ~~portion to be controlled~~ controlled-portion which corresponds to the identification information on an issuer of the control request. Therefore, the following advantages are brought about. Even if the control command to the information device issued by the control device ~~holds no destination of the portion to be controlled being an object of control~~ contains no information concerning the selected controlled-portion, the information device can advantageously refer to the control correspondence table upon receipt of control requests from a plurality of control devices. As a result, the information device can, by this referring, advantageously detect the ~~portion to be controlled~~ controlled-portion which is associated with the relevant control device and can determine the detected ~~portion~~ controlled-portion is what the control device wants to control. It is thus advantageously possible to construct the system which can properly operate ~~properly that portion to be controlled~~ the controlled-portion.

[0185] Having described preferred embodiments of the present invention with reference to the accompanying drawings, it is to be understood that the present invention is not limited to the above-mentioned embodiments and that various changes and modifications can be effected therein by one

skilled in the art without departing from the spirit or scope of the present invention as defined in the appended claims.